

The Fair Maid of Islington.



THERE was a lass of Islington,
As I have heard many tell,
And she would to fair London go,
Fine apples and pears to sell,
And as along the street she flung,
With her basket on her arm,
Her pears to sell, you may know it well
This fair maid meant no harm.

But as she tript along the street,
Her pleasant fruit to sell,
A vintner did her meet,
Who lik'd this maid full well.

Says he, Fair maid, what have you there,
In basket decked brave?
Fine pears, quoth she, and if it please ye,
A taste, Sir, you shall have.
The vintner took a taste,
And lik'd it well, for why?
The maid he thought of all the rest
Most pleasing to his eye.

Says he, Fair maid, I have a suit,
That you to me must grant;
Which if I find you be so kind,
Nothing that you shall want.

Thy beauty doth so please my eye,
And dzzles so my sight,
That now of all my liberty
I am deprived quite.

Then prithee now consent to me,
And do not put me by:
It is but one small courtesy,
All night with you to lie.

Sir, if you lie with me all night,
As you propound to me,
I do expect that you should prove
Both courteous, kind and free.
And for to tell you now in short,
It will cost you Five pound.
A match, a match the vintner said,
And so let this go round.

When he had lain with her all night,
Her money she did crave.
O stay, quoth he, the other night,
And the money thou shalt have.
I cannot stay, nor will I stay,
I needs must now be gone,
Why so thou may'st, thy money go look,
For money I'll pay the none.

This maid she made no more ado,
But to a justice went,
And unto him she made her moan,
Who did her case lament.
She said, she had her cellar let out
To a vintner in the town,
And that he did then agree
Five pounds to pay her down.

But now, quoth she, the case is thus,
No rent that he will pay:
Therefore your worship I beseech
To send for him straitway.

Then strait the justice to him sent,
And asked the reason why,
That he would pay this maid no rent?
To which he did reply.

Altho' I hired a cellar of her,
And the possession was mine,
I never put any thing into it,
But one poor pipe of wine:
Therefore my bargain it was hard,
As you may plainly see;
I from my freedom was debar'd.
Then, good Sir, favour me.

This fair maid being ripe of wit,
She strait reply'd again:
There were two more butts at the door,
Why did you not rowl them in?
You had your freedom and your will,
As is to you well known;
Therefore I do desire still,
For to receive my own.

The justice hearing of the case,
Did then give orders strait,
That he the money should pay down,
She should no longer wait.
Withal he told the vintner plain,
If he a tenant be,
He must expect to pay the same,
And not to sit rent-free.

But when the money she had got,
She put it in her purse,
And clapt her hand on the cellar-door,
Saying, 'Tis ne'er the worse.
Which caus'd the people all to laugh,
To see this vintner fine,
Outwitted by a country girl,
About his pipe of wine.